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THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA is a national non-profit organization whose object is the improvement of the art of puppetry. The organization is governed by a national council elected by the membership.

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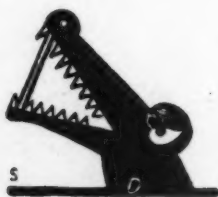
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'It Ain't No Sin . . .

To Take Off Your Skin And
Dance Around in Your Bones'
(Old Song.)

Martin Stevens

A real earnest letter from Marge Kelly, of The Kelly Puppet Studio, Topeka, Kansas, which merits your attention. Some of us "Sacred Cows" of the P. of A. sound off at the least - or no - provocation, stating flatly that this or that is so and there is no other way (my dear Olga even took sacred old me to task the other day for my rigid fiats about the only way to write a play!) and of course it is perfectly natural that Festival-goers of many years do get bored seeing the same things over and over. But we are apt to lose sight of the intention which started off P. of A. and its annual Festival in the first place.

Back before there was a P. of A., when Olga and I were dewy-eyed and panting beginners, we'd dash about the country to see this show and that company, and hang on every syllable of those fascinating people who were actually doing puppets, and when we'd pumped them dry we'd start asking them what they thought of so-and-so's show, and such-and-such's show. And we were surprised to learn that most of them just went along doing what they were doing, and hadn't seen so-and-so's show. Some of the "greats" had never seen some of the other "greats," and most of the "smalls" had never seen anybody! Almost all of them were having to invent puppetry as they went along. It was largely as though one had never heard Heifitz or Elman, and believed fiddle-playing was compassed in those noises that shrieked through the walls from Junior next door practicing his scales. So one of the prime reasons for having a

festival was to let all of us see what was going on, and thereby get some sense of comparison. That it was a valid idea is proved by the fact that although running P. of A. and the Festival is all work and no pay for those who do it, it has continued for twenty years! A lot of good has been done a lot of people in that time. And now come this letter from Marge Kelly, which reminds me of what is actually going on:

" . . . I was thoroughly discouraged upon reading the JOURNAL through this month and finding the severe criticism of skeletons. Sure, I use one. My son and I are the only puppeteers in this area doing our type of work, and the skeleton is great stuff. True, I've tried to liven mine up by bringing on a devil which scares the skeleton to pieces. But the components are still there. It is still the same old thing. Originally, the devil appeared from a tombstone with a puff of flourescent smoke — but that stuff smells like sulphur, and the MC has to set the tombstone for me, which is a bother to him, and a possibility of stage wait that I couldn't risk. So there goes part of my so-called originality sacrificed to the practicability of pace and timing so necessary to my type of act. Is there a happy medium? I don't want to let puppetry down. The experiences, the travel, the thrills, and the very deep personal satisfaction that puppets have made available to me have become so much a part of my life that never again will I be able to live fully without them. I know now that I never lived fully until I found

them. I had a crude start when I attended the Minneapolis Festival, my first, in 1953. There I saw several skeletons - and many, many other things I'd never seen before. It gave me a chance to compare. The Institute gave my husband and me a chance to learn how really workable puppets were made. I feel so sorry for the newcomers now who haven't that glorious opportunity to learn by doing. And if their chance to see the various old standby numbers is taken from them too, how can they ever get started in their own territories without the sure-fire numbers that appeal to audiences and give them a show that appeals while they are learning, so that they will continue in the work, and eventually reach the ultimate goal of good original puppetry? The trite must always be worked out first - and in puppetry, it gives the confidence to strive for more. With the fine teachers provided at that 1953 Institute, plus the encouragement, advice, and actual help I've had from them since, I feel that I gained years in months. My work was trite at first too - but I gained real satisfaction from it at the time. Only when I had enough confidence to analyze did I begin to strive for the original - and I know now how very far I am from my goal, but that, too, is progress."

That say anything to you? And lest you think this kid is just a sometime thing with puppets on an odd afternoon, she's got more dates than I have. "My contracts already make it seem unlikely that I will have even two days off in August next year, but if you get to go, and the skeletons are boring the majority, won't you please speak a word for the wide-eyed beginners in their defense?" Marge - consider it spoken.

Editor's Note:

Poor old "BONES"! No doubt he is seething in anger with all this discussion about the pro and cons of rattling his bones before P of A Festival audiences.

Truthfully, "Bones" was only chosen as a "symbol" of all that was trite and copied and stale and non-original in recent Festival "free for alls." Many of us old timers and some not so old, felt that if puppetry is to survive as an art . . . if it is even to hold its own in this race for recognition in the entertainment world, new and younger puppeteers must be awakened to the value of creativeness, something different, something original, something that belongs to its creator, into which he has put his very heart and soul . . . not a fac-simile of something he saw at last year's Fest.

I will go along with Marge when she says "the trite must always be worked out first . . . and in puppetry it gives the confidence to strive for more," only I'd like to change one word and substitute "fundamentals" for trite which I believe is what Marge really meant. There are certain fundamentals of construction, manipulation, production, etc., which we have tried to teach at Institute and Workshops. This is only a foundation on which to build . . . and Marge recognizes this fact when she says "Only when I had enough confidence to analyze did I begin to strive for more." When every puppeteer has gained this "confidence to strive for more" we will cease to have "hash-overs" of former Pot-Pourris.

With this thought in mind, what are you creating for next year's Festival? It's time to get that dream in the back of your head out on the workbench! . . . Viv.

Effort Will Do It

Carbonated



Copy Cats

George Latshaw

We realize that no harangue, no plea, no propaganda, will drive all the skeletons back to their closets, or stop the opera singers from hitting high notes with their lungs a-quiver. The *Flesh and The Bones* have been applauded for too many years to bow gracefully from the puppet stage after a few irritable remarks. Audiences (people, that is, not puppeteers) will continue to laugh when a marionette sits down to play the piano — after he has dusted the keys, flipped his tails, and missed the bench. They will marvel at that little wooden foot tapping in perfect time to the music. They will gasp at the dexterity of a juggler; the impossibility of a smoker.

These hardy perennials, the trick marionettes, are a part of our heritage. They are a tradition in the puppet theatre, and they will survive in spite of the disgruntled snorts about so much of history repeating itself at the Festivals. We are apt to forget these variety turns are eternally new - to someone! Every few years another generation looks upon them with fresh eyes. Can you recall the wonder of seeing a skeleton disintegrate, then re-assemble for the first time? It may have prompted you to pursue puppetry from that moment on. To the showmen whose artistry and skill is dedicated to preserving **THE TRADITION**, we owe some little thanks, for they have beguiled many of us to imitate them.

Although I never built a skeleton during my growing years with marionettes, I could barely wait to finish my first piano player and opera singer. Cedric Head had a magnificent creation — a slack-jawed diva, who inhaled with gusto. She was the love of my life, and I wanted one like her immediately. The Mme. was every inch the artiste, with a fiery pompadour and a big hoop skirt, and she sang to the strains of a raucous record in French. O-ho, her vibrato shook her to the very core, and sometimes her jaw plunged below her neckline in one swoop (to our great delight,) or simply slid up and down like a trombone. For the finale, she turned into a balloon and sailed off.

As a student at the Kingsland Marionette Camp at Lake Dunmore, Vermont, I thought I would have the perfect opportunity to copy my ideal. When I innocently informed Mr. Head of this plan, he wisely guided me toward creating an opera singer with a different mouth action entirely. It was neither the slack jaw of the diva, nor the familiar Sarg inserted mouth; it was an ingeniously simple device to make the lip move. I was thirteen at the time, and if my disappointment was very great, it was also temporary. Similarly, I was steered away from copying the clown who juggled - and nudged in the direction of two clowns who could bounce a ball between them, or toss it back and forth.

I am indebted to Cedric Head for his guidance at this early stage. With a kind, but firm hand, he maneuvered me away from an outright imitation of his work, and encouraged me to find a direction of my own. It gave me a healthy respect for the uniqueness in other people — and myself. The following summer, at fourteen, I was horrified when an adult (and less pliable) student insisted on copying two of Mr. Head's marionettes inch by inch, calipers and all. The man was devilishly pleased by the accuracy of his dimensions — his counterfeits with cold chisel, but he could not duplicate the joy, the life, the inspiration of the original.

Imitation is a way of learning. Babies do it. Their cheerful cascade of burbles and beeps, lalas and hic-a-boos takes more definite shape as they imitate the sounds adults make to them. They learn the language by imitating the sounds they hear. Later they imitate the shapes and forms of letters in learning to print and write. When they come to a point at which there is nothing to imitate, they venture out to experience things on their own. This may or may not be successful, so imitation develops as a safe way to learn — even to learning about puppets. If we copy a good thing, how can we go wrong? But imitation is a childish beginning, at best.

I was talking to Rufus Rose several years ago about the "copy-cat" qual-

ity of a number of marionette routines, and he said, "All of us borrow to some extent. We don't live in a void where we could create something that never was. All of us are influenced by everything we see and hear." Rufie's comment has so much to say about an approach to the creative process, let's savor it a bit. "All of us are influenced..." Let's admit it and take advantage of it. Influence is something less direct than imitation. It suggests, rather than duplicates, and we are free to accept all or parts of what it offers. By borrowing a bit here, a snatch of something over there, we can re-combine the elements into something that didn't have quite that form before... and this is the beginning of the creative process. Some puppeteers are influenced only by what they see in other puppet shows, and this is ridiculous. The world is a far bigger place than our small field; influences are everywhere ready to be used, if we can recognize them. "...influenced by everything we see and hear," Rufie said. This covers a lot of ground in a day's time; round the clock, wherever we are, whatever we do, we are brushing against material that might be adapted for the puppet theatre. Why wait for the four days of Festival for a fresh idea — they are bursting at us in everything we see and hear the other 361 days a year. Imagine that!

Hands Up!

Herb Scheffel

Hand ballet, closely akin to the medium of hand puppet manipulation, has graduated from compact night club acts, into the legitimate theatre in London and New York City.

Richard Charlton and John Krimsky,

who presented the mad, unusual, intellectual revue **CRANKS** at the Bijou Theatre in New York last month, have incorporated two numbers done entirely in hand ballet technique. Prior to the New York run, the show had a

successful 9-month run in London. John Cranko, who invented the "business" for the two hand ballets, wrote and directed the entire production.

Yves Joly's troupe, LES MAINS JOLY (see PUPPETRY JOURNAL, January-February, 1952; "MASTERS OF PANTOMIME"), was the forerunner in popularizing this offshoot form of puppetry. George LaFaye and Company cropped up later, and both night club and vaudeville acts are still playing the smoke-filled cafes and the theatres of Paris.

Observing the operators at work, really hands dressed only in pure white or multi-colored gloves, one can't help realizing that here are all the basic movements of hand puppet manipulation. The great difference of hand ballet is that the emphasis is more on pure suggestion without visual props or the puppets on the hands. It is like hand puppetry stripped of the puppets, allowing for a new essence to creep into visual play and movement. The absence of the puppet, is the inspiration for a quality of humor and movement which can only be associated with hand ballet technique — proving that each medium has its limitations and its strong points. The idea is to play up the strong points of its limitations. Hand ballet comes across with a special brand of intimacy and humor, or for want of a better word — a more personal quality, since an entire figure (the puppet) is absent.

In CRANKS, the lyrics of an entire ballad "Elizabeth," are interpreted in movements suggesting: flowers, wind, clouds, rain, waterfalls, etc., by four sets of gloved hands, by economical lighting. The movements of 8 hands take on the surprising appearance of an entire large ballet ensemble, with four voices harmonizing the lyrics in the background.

In the first act, one of three characters is played by hand ballet in a complete sketch "Gloves." Every move

of each finger gives a hint to the third characters personality. This is hand ballet at its most satirical height — incorporating two live actors in the skit as well — like contrasting humans and puppets in a play or variety turn, in the puppet medium.

The sketch revolves around a boulevardier, who drops into a cafe, sits at a cafe table waiting to keep an engagement. A rendezvous is about to take place we suspect. Bored with reading his gazette, the man nonchalantly tosses it aside on the table. Immediately two fluttering, nervous white gloves appear from beneath the rustling newspaper. The gloved hands dance, animatedly, by themselves — beguiling the terrified man. Fascinated, the man finds his own hands locked and embraced in the wandering white fingers — together they are carried away in an entire dance routine until the mans amour appears on the scene. The gloves are quickly brushed aside and out of sight. The lovers greet each other, but the insistent gloves reappear — they run through the girls fetching feather boa, they run lasciviously up, down, around the lady herself. The man slaps the gloves away — all the while desperately trying to conceal from the young lady, that she is obviously involved in a triangle. Annoyed, the girl leaves the cafe followed by her young man — the gloves suddenly come upon the wine decanter and two empty glasses on the table. The wierd finish to the number arrives when — slowly, meditatively, the gloves contemplate the possibilities, then casually take the stopper off the wine bottle, pour two glasses full of wine, clink the two glasses as in a silent toast to themselves — and disappear, mysteriously back into the darkness. Blackout!

The whole sketch is a howl, with a soft, light, tinkling musical background. It is one step further in experimentation with this fascinating, economical medium of entertainment.

The Architectural Setting

Jero Magon

The fixed architectural stage, which may consist of a single structure or a panorama of buildings, is practically as old as the theatre itself.

Is this type of stage recommended for the puppet theatre? Let us consider some of the advantages.

Since the main elements of the setting remain unchanged throughout a performance, no intermissions are required for shifting scenery. Changes in locale may be suggested by appropriate properties, or by scenic fragments, such as screens or hangings. A performance may thus proceed from beginning to end with a minimum of delays for scenic transformations.

Then, too, there is a sense of structural unity in a production in which there is no scenic variation from scene to scene.

Also, when the stage is liberated from a succession of scenic pictures, greater concentration is possible on the actors.

Norman-bel Geddes transformed the stage of the Century Theatre in New York into a Gothic cathedral for Max Reinhardt's monumental production of *The Miracle*. Jacques Copeau built an architectural arrangement, based on Elizabethan models, for the Theatre du Vieux Colombier in Paris. The Marais Theatre in Brussels and the Maddermarkt Theatre in Norwich, England, were likewise patterned after Elizabethan playhouses. The Robinson Jeffers-Judith Anderson production of *Medea* had a fixed architectural setting suggestive of the noble Greek skene of antiquity.

While this type of setting has been ever-pleasant in the legitimate theatre, it has been used infrequently by puppeteers.

The Tatterman Marionettes em-

ployed an Elizabethan architectural setting for their production of "*The Taming of the Shrew*." The authentic flavor of the Shakespearean stage was recaptured in this convincing presentation.

Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin staged her effective rod-puppet production of Maeterlinck's "*The Death of Tintagiles*" with a permanent architectural setting. Changes of scene were accomplished by altering the lights on the castle, which rose without a proscenium from the rampart-like screens of the puppet booth.

There is, in my opinion, no valid reason why the fixed architectural stage, which has had so honorable a history in all vital periods of the drama, cannot be accommodated in the puppet theatre.

As to the argument that an audience may become bored with the same background in a fairly long play, I have already pointed out that variety of scene can be suggested by the introduction of hangings, changeable panels and other accessories. The imaginative use of fluid, dramatic lighting, illuminating various portions of the scene at intervals, will relieve the monotony of the fixed background.

To be sure, this type of setting may not be used indiscriminately. For many types of plays — especially classic drama — the architectural stage will provide a structurally decorative background that will stimulate the imagination of the spectator.

As Sheldon Cheney so aptly puts it: "In freeing the audience-mind from picture recognition, one concentrates interest on the play; in making the setting almost wholly unreal, one intensifies the reality of that inner core of drama that speaks to the soul."

Donald Oenslager . . . Designer

The work of Donald Oenslager, stage designer, teacher, and a major force in the development of the theater in America for thirty years, was presented by the Detroit Institute of Arts in a retrospective exhibition opening September 25 and continuing through November 4.

It includes about one hundred of Oenslager's works, covering thirty years of Broadway dramas and musical comedies, operas, ballets and, more recently, television productions.

Detroit Art Institute Director Edgar P. Richardson writes: "After graduating from Harvard. . . he studied scenic production and design in the theaters of Europe, 1923-24, a period of great change in everyone's attitude toward design for the stage. On his return he worked under the direction of MacGowan, Robert Edmund Jones and Eugene O'Neill in the Provincetown Playhouse and the Greenwich Village Theatre, 1924-25. With Robert Edmund Jones, Lee Simonson and Jo Meilziner, he has contributed to the creation of a new stagecraft in this country.

Richardson continues: "He has a deep conviction also about the purpose and function of a stage setting: he is a thinker as well as a decorator. As part of this approach he has formed one of the greatest collections in this country of the history of theater design."

In his writings, Oenslager emphasizes the "inner sense of the theater" necessary to all of those connected with it; he traces the changing conceptions of stage design in the past thirty years; notes the close relationship between the playwright's interpretation and that of the designer; and concludes with a plea for the use of new materials in stage sets.

"Our scenery is painted by the

square foot with the traditional brushes of one hundred and fifty years ago and mostly on the same old material," he writes. "Why not take advantage of the new materials derived from plastics and glass and metal? . . . We rest too content and languish with painful pleasure in our cramped theaters and on our outmoded stages. American industry has invented the word 'automation' meaning simultaneous social and material progress for everyone. Clearly, our theater is in need of automation. . . . The theater needs a transmutation. It needs the exploring drive of the experimental scientist and his caring eye for order. The artist in the theater and the experimental scientist are far from incompatible. . . . They inhabit the same experimental domain. . . . The scientist would first insist on the newest laboratories in the way of both proscenium and experimental theaters in order to provide a modern environment in which to present theater with maximum effect for a modern audience accustomed to the immediate worldwide sights and sounds of radio motion pictures and television."

Discussing his craft, Oenslager continues: "In our theater the stage designer is essentially an artist-craftsman. He uses his head and his hands. He has many facets of knowledge — architecture and sculpture, painting and engineering, decorating and the graphic arts. He is at once a woodworker, a weaver, a florist, a dressmaker, a plumber, an upholsterer. He is accustomed to design settings for all mediums of theatrical expression — drama, opera, music, ballet, motion pictures and television. He assumes many styles working on one production as a realist or a surrealist, on another as an expressionist of an impressionist."

Why Not Try Poetry

Josie Robbins

Script! Script! Where to find script is the constant cry of the puppeteer. Poetry can provide the answer. Not every poem can be dramatized with puppets, but neither can every story. But there are many good poems that require only a puppet or two and a few simple props.

It was while experimenting with finger puppets that I discovered the fun of using poetry with puppets. I tried dancing, pantomime and novelty acts, but the children continually asked me to make the puppets talk. I was afraid for I had read that dialogue was not for such small creatures. Then while going through my poetry collection it suddenly occurred to me that the short, lilting lines of a poem might be particularly suitable to these small puppets. A mad orgy of reading produced about fifty poems that seemed suitable.

Hand puppets and marionettes might be successful with poetry. However, the finger puppet remains my favorite since they seem most adaptable.

Poetry supplies its own music and the language is good and carefully chosen. Puppets are particularly suitable to depict fairies, elves, nationalities and Bible characters. They do not spoil the illusion created by the poem but only serve to make it seem more colorful and real. Poetry is for a solo performance. This has many advantages, as only a puppet or two is required for each poem. Scenery should be kept extremely simple.

"Sailor" by Eleanor Farjeon requires just a sailor and a treasure chest full of the objects mentioned — coral, silk, parrot, pearls, silver, gold, feathers, incense, mantilla, ship, reindeer, duck and unicorn's horn. The audience guesses what the objects are as each is taken from the chest and the poem fills

in where each was obtained — "Coral from China" and Silks from Siam," etc. It took me two weeks to learn the poem because of places like Seringapatam and Kalamazoo, but an audience can repeat it the second time when these visual aids are used.

"Elf and the Dormouse" by Oliver Herford is a favorite. Several times after giving a performance to class rooms, each pupil has drawn a picture of what he saw and liked best as a "thank you" to me. Although only an elf (made of three pipe cleaners, a paper napkin and crepe paper,) and a dormouse (one of Norah Welling's delightful velvet characters with a pipe cleaner and two rubber bands to control it) and a tiny umbrella for a toad stool are used, the children draw flowers and rain. This shows that a visual aid is only a start for the imagination and does not kill any creative effort. The children (and adults) love to see an animated Elf and are delighted with the sleepy dormouse. Those who know the poem realize new joy from seeing it dramatized and those who haven't heard it before are always greatly amused by the last line "And that's how umbrellas first were invented."

A few of the other poems that dramatize well are: "Conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus" by Rowena Bennett; "Meeting the Easter Bunny" by the same poet; "A Thanksgiving Fable" by Oliver Herford involves just a cat and a mouse; "Hottentot Tot" by Newman Levy; "Indian Children" by Annette Wynne; "Weeng" (An Indian Slumber Song) by Lew Sarett; "The Organ Grinder" by Winifred J. Mott; "A Goblinade" by Florence Page Jaques; "Fairy Verses" by Mirian Clark Potter; and "Circus" by Eleanor Farjeon.

Perils and Pitfalls

Bea Geller and Ann Cohen

Ever have a mike go dead during a performance?

It can happen to anybody — but the show must go on! Project your voice as strongly as you can, and hang in there. That's what we did.

Ever set up your lighting on a high stage, then discover that half your show is in deep shadow, because the audience sits on the floor? Unforeseeable difficulty — gotta expect things like that. Nevertheless, we're trouper, so we stretched our arms higher, and carried on.

Ever have a janitor make his stage debut while you're straining your arms and voice in a desperate effort to be seen and heard? We mean a live janitor, complete with broom. He came from behind, separated our puppet-curtain from the big stage-curtain, shuffled out before the footlights wearing a look of enviable boredom, and proceeded to tidy up. Brought down the house!

Nothing is incredible to a puppeteer, so we here report the rest of that day's events. You've only heard the beginning. Concealed from view and inaudible, we charged ahead, ignoring the janitor. ("Charged ahead" — that means you shake the puppets faster and yell louder.)

The audience was a Children's Day Camp — 250 strong, armed with rain gear and seated on the floor. Our show was the final activity of the day. The rain beat noisily against the windows, adding to the din of the tin lunch boxes. They were having refreshments. Summer fruits were in season — peaches, plums, nectarines — furnishing plenty of large pits for joy-

ous throwing at each other, and welcome release of young energy after the long day at quiet indoor games. Then, too, since this was the time of day when the entire camp was assembled, it afforded the logical opportunity to distribute their weekly newspaper.

We had released advance publicity, promising "an amusing and educational" program. In sad retrospect, we feel that at least we kept our word — it turned out amusing for them, but educational for us.

"If at First You Don't Succeed . . ."

This part is the sequel to the article above, a humorous account of a performance which seemed to have been cursed by an all-encompassing "whammy." That show was a nightmare because it not only included every known mishap of the trade, but it also added a few new ones.

However, we feel that the tale as we left it was incomplete, and that we owe it to ourselves and to our fellow puppeteers, to furnish the happy ending so necessary to a good puppet story. It gives us great pleasure to report that having learned our lesson well, we set about correcting every avoidable cause of future trouble.

We bought a complete portable sound system of our own, improved our lighting, sharpened the script, and got up a "Requirements Form," which is mailed in advance to all of our bookers, and which insures us against all foreseeable interference. Result: The same show was so well received the next time we gave it, that the committee rebooked us immediately for a return date.

See Puppet Store Advertisement Last Page



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

U. C. L. A.

Just a glimpse into the future! Beautiful Josaiah Royce Hall, one of the first buildings in Westwood Campus, will be the site of many activities of the 1957 Festival. We are hearing glowing accounts of plans afoot for the Festival at U. C. L. A. We are promised a thrill packed Fest, with new shows, new people, new friends and an outstanding program. Start stuffing that piggy bank . . . for a wonderful trip to the Coast, and a Festival new and different from all the rest.

ARE THESE PUPPETS?

Are these queer looking objects puppets? Who's kidding whom?

Just to prove that George Latshaw "practices what he preaches!" No "Copy Cats" here! These moon creatures are waiting to see who will land in "The Runaway Rocket."

Neither did the Vellemans, Leo and Dora, get the ideas for these handsome stylized creations from the last Pot Pourri! Makes us have faith after all . . . there are "new puppets under the sun!" And there are people who dare to be different! Do you?

"Proof of the pudding is in the eating." Proof that you can be yourself can be submitted at the 1957 Festival!

THE MIKADO

We wish the Colemans had told us more about these handsomely costumed puppets from the "Mikado," but they really speak for themselves . . . The Mikado, Yum-Yum, Poo-bah

and Ko-Ko, all in the authentic, elaborate costumes of their day. If these are as handsome in color as the last show we saw of the Colemans, the show must have been truly spectacular . . . their lighting and staging was something to be remembered.

DEAN SHORT

We hope Dean will forgive us for holding this picture for so long . . . he really has an impressive family of "Friends," and we hope they visit us again some day.

BRUCE BUCKNELL

Bruce Bucknell, member of Council and instigator of the P of A Christmas card idea, has shown an impressive array of night club puppets at the last few Festivals. Beautifully made and costumed, (Nola gets a bouquet here, too), they have entertained with some impressive routines . . . well timed, perfectly manipulated and carefully staged.

JIM MENKE

Jim, so recently out of the Junior classification, will be remembered for his "Hansel and Gretel" at the last Fest. Jim writes that he has been on a tour of the South this winter with Addis Williams as his partner, and having a wonderful time and thrilling experiences.

He is shown here with Nanette, Blanchette and Lizette, the Poodle Sisters, and Emcee, Corky Calahan, part of his club date act.

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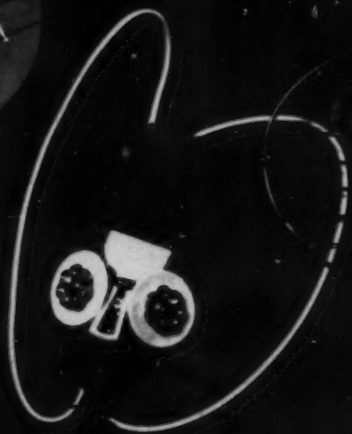
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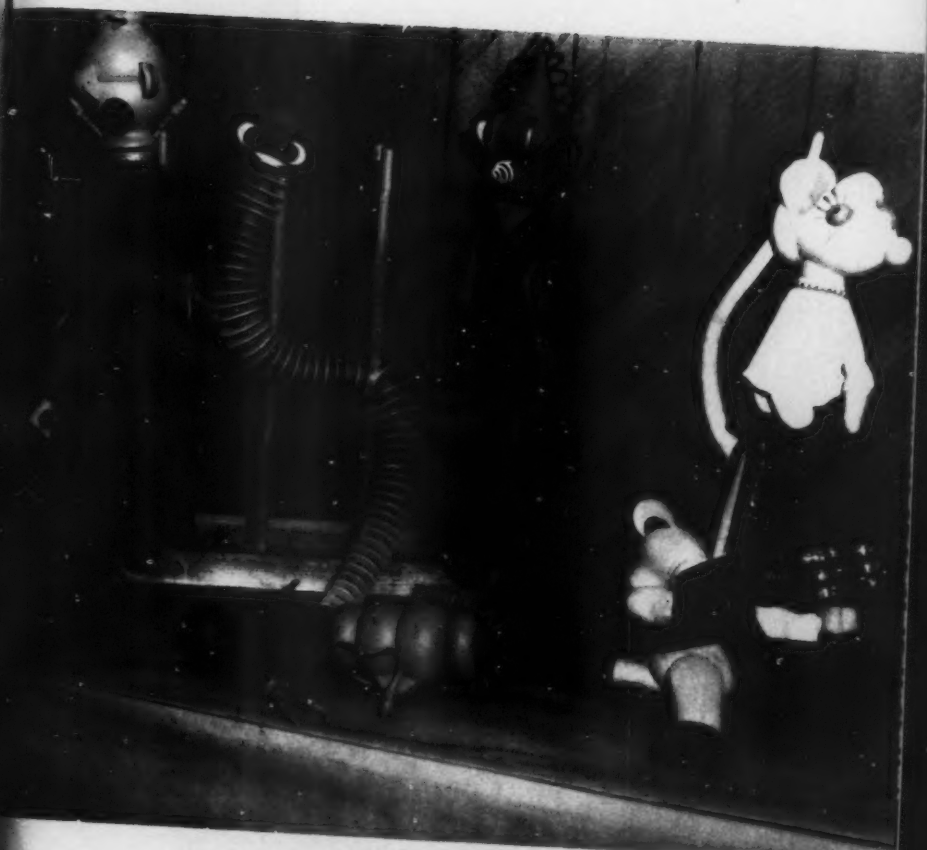
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BRUCE BUCKNELL



JIM MENKE



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Festival in California

Melvyn Helstien

A tentative program has been organized around the general theme, "Creative Puppetry." Plans are in the making to have lecture-demonstrations illustrating the development of a complete and integrated show from the inception of the idea to the finished production.

Based on the burgeoning interest in Creative Dramatics as used in the Elementary Schools, in Public Recreation and in Religious Education, there will be a program demonstrating the method of working from an idea and indefinitely characterized puppets. With a group of children working with an experienced leader, a play will be developed by improvisation. It is hoped that this will be a vital illustration of the ideas in the new book by Marjorie Batchelder and Virginia Lee Comer, **PUPPETS AND PLAYS**.

Discussions are underway to demonstrate the actual production of a television puppet show, including the camera work, technical direction, technical problems, under the direction of Mr. Rudy Bretz, Head of the Television and Radio Division, Department of Theater Arts. An evaluation period with group participation will follow.

On alternate summers The Department of Theater Arts offers a Summer Theater Workshop. Next summer such a workshop will be held preceding the Festival. It is with pleasure that the Department extends a cordial invitation to P. of A. members to arrive two days early for the Fest so that they may attend the final performance of the workshop, a play soon to be announced.

Working with Los Angeles Junior Programs, we hope that a unique feature of this year's Fest will be a recreational program for the children attending with their parents. Not far from the site of the main activities of the meetings is the University Elementary School, with its exceptional playground facilities. Through the cooperation of members of Junior Programs and the Los Angeles Junior League, children may be entrusted to a play program which will permit parents to attend sessions without interruption.

In the planning for all members, is an old-fashioned western barbecue, on the campus grounds. We hope to take advantage of all the unique qualities of West Coast hospitality to make this Fest one of the best ever.

A New Year for the P of A

George Merten

Now that all the Happy New Years have been said and countless resolutions have been made, let us wish just one more Happy New Year — this time to the P. of A. as a whole. Not only to each member, but to the organization itself. By now many of

the private resolutions made during the light hearted jollity that always prevails at the beginning of a new year have no doubt already been abandoned. At this moment we are all much more sober minded about the whole thing and resolutions made now

will be more considered and can be made to "stick."

I would suggest then, before the year advances further, that we all make a resolution to support and boost the P. of A. into the strong and respected organization it deserves to be.

In many ways P. of A. is probably stronger at the moment than it has been for some time. Now, then, while it is in the ascendancy, is the physiological time to keep P. of A. on the up grade. We all know it is easier by far to keep something rolling than to either reverse a backward motion or move it from inertia. Let us take the easier road while it is open.

We still have the four figure membership to attain before next Festival. With the present total around 700, it

only requires each member to get half a new member to reach this goal. It is probably somewhat easier to get a whole member than just half, so let us all set about it as though we mean it. Don't neglect either those who have had a membership and let it drop for some reason or other.

Ask yourself why you joined P. of A. in the first place and why you continue to belong? Surely the reasons you have would apply to anyone interested in puppetry at whatever level. Now apply this reasoning to the getting of at least one new member. I am looking forward to seeing the honor roll of new membership-getters at least two pages long in the JOURNAL in the near future.

Good luck and good hunting!

New Membership Honor Roll

696 Members as of September 1, 1956

683 Members as of November 1, 1956

696 Members as of January 1, 1957

Is your name on this Honor Roll? Write your name on the back of the Invitation to Membership or notify Rena Prim that you are sending a new membership.

Nelson Rabe—2, Fern Zwickey—2, Grace Weil—1, Duane Gerde—1, Lettie Connell—1, Milton Halpert—1, John Zweers—1, Virginia C. Jones—1, Ed Johnson—1, Martin Stevens—1, Cedric Head—1, Tom Tichenor—1, Margarethe Buxton—1.

Use Your Membership Folder

Get a New Member Today

Transportation to L. A.

Olga Stevens

Olga Stevens, transportation chairman, sent a very complete schedule of Great Northern Railway, but we have received a letter from the General Agent since advising that details would be sent direct if we would supply membership list. This we have done so you will have information direct from the Great Northern.

Keep in mind that a round trip ticket permits you to travel via diverse routes at no additional cost...going westbound via the Pacific Northwest through Portland, and returning via New Orleans from L. A., or direct lines to Chicago, Santa Fe via Grand Canyon or Union Pacific via Salt Lake City to Chicago, included in one ticket. Grand Canyon side trip slightly higher. Stop-over tours available at Glacier Park, sightseeing can be arranged at Portland. Address V. J. Kenny, GA., Great Northern Railway, 1008 Tri-State Bldg., Cincinnati, 2, Ohio for help in planning if you would like this more round about trip.

Round trip first class ticket from Chicago to San Francisco with tax on Great Northern line is \$153.40. Additional from San Francisco to L. A.

The JOURNAL has on file a complete price list of Pullman accommodations, but all these should be included in the literature you receive direct, so we are not repeating them here.

Olga asks, "Do you think it advisable to have those who wish to make a real vacation trip of it and travel by rail write me and we could schedule a trip whereby passengers could be picked up at certain points and continue the trip together?" Will you write her at once if interested!

She further suggests that it is possible to pick up cars at Detroit and other distributing centers and drive them through to the coast...cars must be delivered in five days...this means steady driving...a small sum, approximately \$50. is usually paid by the manufacturer for this service. This should appeal to some of our young men.

Olga is open at all times to suggestions or will endeavor to co-ordinate any group that wish to make arrangements to drive together, but don't put it off 'till the last minute and expect her to give you efficient service.

William A. Dwiggins

"William Addison Dwiggins, noted type designer and topographer died Dec. 26, at his home in Hingham, Mass.

"Dwiggins was known for his "Metro" series of type faces, the first designed specifically for newspaper headlines. He brought that out in 1929 when he won the gold medal of the American Institute of Graphic Arts.

"Dwiggins designed dozens of book type faces, including "Caledonia" and "Electra" and was the author of books on advertising layout and typography.

He turned out numerous magazine articles, and was associated up to his death with the Mergenthaler Linotype Co. which he first joined in 1929."

He was best known to puppeteers in the P of A for his MARIONETTES IN MOTION, published by Paul McPharlin and for his famous theory of "counter balanced marionettes" which had considerable influence on many professional puppeteers. Many producers have adapted this principle to their own favorite methods of construction.

Puppet Films

Budd Gambee

Puppet films seemed to be somewhat hard to come by this year. Many of those listed below have been on the market for some time. Unfortunately some of the new films were brought to the Festival at the last minute by the producers, this writer had no chance to see or list them, as he was at the Festival only one day. The difficulty of getting producers to provide prints free raises the question of setting aside some funds for the rental of films another year. The P of A is most grateful to the producers who "came through" with this year's Festival film program.

This year several puppet film programs were prepared for showing, and as the writer was present for only one, this article cannot say for a certainty that all of the films were used. If the programs went according to schedule, this was the list:

PUPPETERS. 6 minutes. Black and white. National Film Board of Canada.

One of a series of shorts on Canadian life, this one shows the marionettes of the Le Gendre Puppeteers preparing for a performance.

ONE LITTLE INDIAN. 16 minutes. Color. National Film Board of Canada.

A delightful pedestrian safety film of the little Indian boy who was a great success in the Rodeo but a liability in city traffic. Stop motion animation.

SINBAD. 18 minutes. Color. Film Images.

Ray Mount, California puppeteer, was so kind as to send us a print of this beautifully costumed hand puppet show when the distributor refused.

CARDBOARD MELODRAMA. 6 minutes. Color. Bailey.

This is sheer novelty. A story told with cardboard cut-out figures cleverly animated by stop motion, and played

against dazzling backgrounds of modern fabrics.

At the end of the Tuesday program, Olga and Martin Stevens' latest film in the STOP AND GO series was presented.

EMPEROR'S NIGHTINGALE. 70 minutes. Color. Rembrandt.

This is the beautiful stop motion film of the Andersen tale done by TRNKA of Poland. With this film were two shorts from the same company. **MASKERAGE**, 15 minutes, black and white, takes the viewer on a tour of the African mask collection of a museum. Eerie effect and African tribal music contribute to the impact. **CIRCUS**, 10 minutes, color, features color cardboard figures, animated again by TRNKA of Poland.

DAVID AND GOLIATH. 13 minutes. Black and white. Sterling Films.

The Sue Hastings marionettes retell the classical Bible story.

PETER & THE WHIFFLEHOUND. 10 minutes. Color. Liberty Mutual Ins.

Dorothy Rankin's charming marionette film on traffic safety.

SUR LE PONT D'AVIGNON. 6 minutes. Color. National Film Board of Canada.

One of the beautiful Folk Songs of Canada series, in this case featuring elaborately costumed hand puppets reenacting the words of the song.

SECONDSIGHT SAM. 6 minutes. Color. Association Films.

A "UPA" cartoon on the subject of health insurance. These films with their brilliant colors and fast pace should have a wealth of ideas for puppeteers.

For the Thursday morning program of television films, the writer provided three which may or may not have been used:

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FRIENDLY GIANT. 15 minutes.
Black and white. NET, Indiana U.

CHILDREN'S CORNER. 25 minutes.
Black and white.

MARSHMALLOW FLUFF COM-MERCIALS. 4 minutes. Black and white. Bay State Films.

In addition to these films which were scheduled to be shown, several others were available and may have been "run in" from time to time on the program:

RED RIDING HOOD. 10 minutes. Color. Encyclopaedia Britannica Films. Lesselli Marionettes.

BILL'S BETTER BREAKFAST PUPPET SHOW. 25 minutes. Color. Cereal Institute. Hand puppet show on nutrition.

HANSEL AND GRETEL. 10 minutes. Color. Bailey

Harryhausen stop motion puppets; one of a long series which have proved popular with P of A audiences.

A DOLL IS BORN. 10 minutes. Black and white. Association Films. Scenes in a doll factory.

ROMANCE OF TRANSPORTATION. 10 minutes. Color. National Film Board of Canada. A clever cartoon.

CADET ROUSSELLE. 6 minutes. Color. National Film Board of Canada. Canadian folk song with animated paintings.

CHANTONS NOEL. 10 minutes. Color. National Film Board of Canada. Paper sculpture animated by stop motion.

LIFE HANGS BY A THREAD. 20 minutes. Color. Film Center, Inc. A demonstration of marionettes.

LIST OF SOURCES

Association Films
561 Hillgrove Ave.
La Grange, Illinois

Bailey Films, Inc.
6509 De Longpre Ave.
Hollywood 28, Calif.

Bay State Film Productions
80 Boylston St.
Boston, Mass.

Cereal Institute, Inc.
135 South LaSalle St.
Chicago 3, Ill.

Encyclopedia Britannica
1125 Central Ave.
Wilmette, Ill.

Film Center, Inc.
64 West Randolph St.
Chicago 1, Ill.

Film Images
1860 Broadway
New York 23, N. Y.

Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.
175 Berkeley St.
Boston, Mass.

National Film Board of Canada
630 Fifth Ave, Suite 658
New York 20, N. Y.

N.E.T. Film Service
Indiana University
Audio Visual Center
Bloomington, Ind.

Rembrandt Film Library
13 East 37th St.
New York 16, N.Y.

Sterling Educational Films
205 East 43rd St.
New York 17, N.Y.

The Journal Needs News!
The Journal Needs Photos!
The Journal Needs Articles
About You!

Creative Puppetry

(From notes taken in Basil
Milovsoroff's class)

Lewis Parsons

No one can lay down rules, or formulas for creative puppetry. It is an adventure of the enquiring mind, an exploration of the possibilities of form, design, and the qualities inherent in different types of material. The approach is not imitative, but imaginative. Characters may be highly stylized for purposes of fantasy, or distorted to humorous caricatures for purposes of satiric comedy. The creative puppet theatre imposes no limits to the flight of the imagination, human and animal anatomy do not conform to nature. Even abstract conceptions become alive through movement. Art gives us design, but puppet theatre goes beyond showing design in motion.

In any production one should keep a consistency of style in the stage set as well as in the puppets. The whole production should have form. If you start with squares, stick to squares, if you use circles, stick to circles. The set should suggest an environment or a mood. When you are being very abstract, use some familiar symbol as a key to comprehending the whole, so it will not be necessary for the spectator to ask, "What is it?" The set should not detract from the puppets but should set them off in relief. Don't crowd the playing area with too much scenery or too many props. Scenery and props should be well spaced even when the puppets are able to move in front of them. When foreground objects are the same color as the background use a different shade for the foreground so it will show contour line. Perspec-

tive can be heightened by showing objects in open doors or gateways. The set may have sculptured parts which blend into a flat background. A moving part, such as a nodding branch of a tree, adds life to an immobile set. Thin things such as wires, stems, or springs should be painted in vivid colors. In general use the less brilliant colors for the large areas and use the bright ones sparingly in small areas as accents.

Use materials for their textures and for the possibilities of movement they suggest. Feathers, silk scarves, springs have charming possibilities of movement. The textures of kinds of cloth, screen, tin, rubber, plastics are a challenge to the imagination. In the puppet theatre props become alive and act as puppets themselves. Doors and windows of houses can open of themselves. Exploring motion leads to many a new and refreshing experience.

The thing to remember about proportion is to use dis-proportion. Avoid the monotony of perfect symmetry. Free doodles on paper, or cutting paper in series or in circular designs often lead to the discovery of interesting new basic forms. Forms discovered accidentally and effortlessly can be refined to show the artistic results of craftsmanship. In experimenting, some puppeteers hit upon a style which they keep for all their productions. The truly creative puppeteer will try to go further and find a new style for each new production. The field is still new, the possibilities of creative puppetry have only begun to be explored.

What Are You Creating for Festival?



Rod Young—Punch's Mailbox, Box 14, University of Richmond, Virginia

To the strains of "I'm just a Puppet on the Strings of Love" Mr. Punch pushed Judy towards the stack of news items and as Annette Warren, who recorded that new song for ABC Paramount recordings, trilled her tune, together they tackled the typewriter and mashed the mixed up mess into a column. Herewith, their creation.

While John Crosby, TV and radio columnist for a number of daily newspapers, was on vacation several months ago, one of the guest writers for his syndicated column was the creator of Kukla and Ollie, who expounded many good ideas regarding the intimacy of television, which is the best key to the consistent genius of Burr Tillstrom and the Kuklapolitans. We note that Burr is a partner in the Play Investors Corporation, which financed the successful "New Faces of 1956" on Broadway. The American Dental Association recently published an attractive brochure spotlighting particularly Delores Dragon to whom Kukla explains the importance of Dental health. Since the first week in February is Children's Dental Health Week, perhaps your dentist will have a copy of this illustrated booklet for you. It's special fun if you know and love "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie."

From the Warren R. Smith, Inc. firm is available "The Happy Story," a film made in Pittsburgh produced for the Auxiliary of the Pennsylvania State Dental Society by Happy Productions, Inc., with production super-

vised by Happy and Ida Mae. Happy, the star, is a loveable hand puppet dog, while Ida Mae is a Dental Health Teacher. The script is planned as a clever half hour TV film. Anyone seen it?

Altman's Department Store in New York City displayed the giant six foot puppets made by the Pelham Puppets of England in their five Christmas toy windows during the season past. These all animated monster marionettes, quite expensive, we mentioned once before when they were pictured in TIME magazine.

Nick Coppola, no longer with United Artists in New York, worked with the Suzari Marionettes in Department store window display in Brooklyn over the holiday season and expects to remain tangled in marionettes for awhile with that company. Dorothy Zaconick, always energetic and enterprising, is manager of Suzari's strings. Nick also did Christmas shows with his own hand and hand and rod puppets at the Rockefeller Institute Hospital. We understand Phil Moore assisted Margo Lovelace Visser in Pittsburgh puppet window display this year.

Puppets take the lead in Harper and Brothers new PUPPETS AND PLAYS by Marjorie Batchelder and Virginia Lee Comer. FUNNY THINGS TO MAKE AND DO by Paul Castle and artist Doug Anderson has been published by Sterling.

It was great fun to be home in Ohio for Christmas week and extraordinary

fun to first drive to Dayton for a show on the 26th of December and drop in for a visit with Larry Smith who does highly imaginative work with puppets and marionettes. After nearly three years of TV work on WLWD-TV, Larry is now a Freshman at Ohio State where, with puppets in the back seat for awhile, he is pledging Sigma Chi. Another Sigma Chi, Bil Baird, hasn't done too badly with puppets, so good luck, Larry. We followed Dayton with a trip to Columbus where along with many televiewers we were treated to Don Gilpin as Johnny Wonder on the "Wonderland" TV show, Saturday morning hour on WLWC-TV. Ruth Gilpin was just back from two wonderful show weeks in Atlanta pre-Christmas. INTERIOR DESIGN magazine recently pictured the Gilpin 1948-1956 "Woody Willow" layout in an article about WSB-TV's new Atlanta "White Columns" television studios.

Children's Fairyland, Oakland, California celebrated its sixth wonder birthday Saturday, September 1 with a host of gala events featuring the Hayward Puppeteers. On the 22 and 23 of that month the Fairyland provided wonderful memories for all who participated in the first Puppet Fair. Among those present were Dorothy Hayward who acted as coordinating chairman, Pat Lavin, Lettie Connell, Helena Hayward, Mike and Frances Oznowicz, Jack and Barbara Mee, Ernie, Bee and Tina Drescher, John and Lorraine Crafts, Roberta Mack, Talma-Zetta Wilbur, Marion Derby, Bob and Beverly Philis and Jim Embree. The Hayward Marionettes, Alameda Library Puppeteers, the Mount Puppets, the Vagabond Puppets, the Lilliputian Players, Jan Ballan's Little Theatre, the Lavin Marionettes, the Menlo Marionettes, Marion Derby's Party Puppets, the String Theatre and Ralph Chesse's Marionettes all gave performances and to supplement the excellent exhibits, Roberta Mack di-

rected demonstrations and a puppet class. Harry Burnett of Turnabout fame was one of many interested spectators at this pageant of puppetry concocted by this creative puppet Guild.

At a three day annual Pasadena Art Fair, puppeteer John Zweers pulled strings and directed the YMCA senior puppet club in "Robin Hood" and the elementary group in "Sleeping Beauty." THE INDEPENDENT newspaper featured a nice photo of John and good mention made of P. of A. The PANTAGRAPH paper in Bloomington, Illinois, has always given nice publicity to the work of local puppeteer Mrs. A. E. Crissey, who sends interesting brochures of her party puppets. Speaking of happy publicity, in Detroit, Mrs. Vernone Tracey was given an excellent feature article with pictures in September. The Detroit Puppeteers Guild is as strong as ever with record-breaking attendance records. New officers are: President David Gibson, Vice President Eve Sheldon, Recording Secretary Lily Marcaccio, Corresponding Secretary Emilie Jaeger and Treasurer Patricia Matthai. Fern Zwicky, after blasting around the world with Rip this summer, is acting as adviser, and a better one they couldn't have! Texas, and what better qualification? Plans are afoot for a wonderful year in Detroit and to start things off to a beautiful start was "The Sleeping Beauty" by Ellen and Romain Proctor on October 13. Leo and Dora Velleman delighted Detroiters with their hand puppets on November 17. Dus Cavallo is now situated at the Boston Museum by the way. Guild members, always active with shows here and there, include Harold Ramm who did shows at Northland this summer, Lucille Dennison's group who did a series at J. L. Hudson's Store, Roy Etherington and Phil McIby who are touring a Coleman Marionette show out of Chicago this year, and Meredith Bixby's Marionettes presenting this year "The Magic Stalk."

ENQUIRER in Mid September featured a magazine cover illustration with more photos and story within recording the delightful experiences of grade school children participating at a workshop held in the University of Cincinnati's Teachers College.

And who could be in Columbus without dropping in on Vivian and Clyde Michael and the home of the PUPPETRY JOURNAL? We did just that to make it a swell Noel week. Viv has recently done puppets for a clever new educational show on WOSU-TV with Peg Blickle and her assistants commanding a panel of hand puppets who dramatize scenes from classic drama for an original quiz game. Returning to Virginia from Oxford, Ohio, where we missed Bill and Ruth Duncan who were on their annual Winnipeg Tatterman Marionette show trail, and after being presented some gorgeous Javanese puppets by a member of the Western College faculty, we were fortunate to arrive in time for dinner with Shirley O'Donnell, visiting Caroline S. Lutz on her way back to New York after Christmas in Florida.

With Rod Young directing and narrating in a variety of voices, save for the voice of Mary read by Betsy Minor, the University of Richmond Puppet Studios presented "The Nativity" done with hand and rod figures made under the direction of Richard Scammon over fifteen years ago at the University. Two performances were given, one on campus in early December and again in downtown Richmond at the Valentine Museum where a Professor Perkins from the College of William and Mary appeared and let us know of his special research currently in puppet history. Fourteen students participated in a special WRVA telecast of this show on December 16. The next University production will be a marionette version of George Bernard Shaw's "Androcles and the Lion." This will be done on campus on April

10 and anyone nearby is very welcome. The world museum collection of puppets owned by Caroline Lutz is always open, especially for visiting puppeteers.

PUNCH magazine in October revealed a happy cartoon showing a reclining female hand puppeteer letting hand puppets do the work involved in winding balls of knitting wool. The October ATLANTIC had a two page spread and an interesting account of leather puppets used in the Arab shadow play. The illustrations are wonderful.

We have discovered that the TV wine commercial mentioned last issue is a product of puppeteer Paul Ashley. The winsome rubberfaced Miss in current magazine Drano ads looks like his work too. TV GUIDE week of November 17-23 carried pictures of TV puppets and puppet masters involved in a number of local programs. On hand were Don Williams of WLW-D, Dayton, Ohio, Angel Casey and her wormy friend, Sir J. Worthington Wiggle, WBKB, Chicago, Rugby the Rabbit and Uncle Joe Bova, WABC-TV, New York, Gerry Johnson seen on KRLD-TV, Dallas, Cappy: Frank Webb's art teacher on KEY-T, Santa Barbara, California, Mary Schmidt from WISN-TV, Milwaukee and Traf-fy, who gives safety lessons on the Canadian version of Howdy Doody. The American Howdy just celebrated his ninth year of TV broadcasting, by the way.

Hope you received some of the lovely UNICEF Christmas cards. Two puppet designs were included and were designed by Joseph Low, eminent American graphic artist. Meredith's Marionettes are not only show conscious but radio conscious. Meredith Bixby recently rejoiced when the FCC granted the application of the Saline, Mich., Broadcasting Co., Inc., to operate a new radio station. Meredith happens to be President of the corporation.

George Latshaw found time to do art work for a Steven's film-strip and was Hackenschmitting hither and yon with his original shows, "The Prince Who Popped," and "Tiger in the Toyshop." Martin and Olga, Stevens, who else, are treating the eastern audiences to double one-man shows. That's the kind where Olga performs "Lost Boy" and Steve helps and then they turn around and Steve performs "The Toy-maker" and Olga helps. Sounds sort of like a cooperative octopus, only nicer! The children's book, CRAB VIL-LAGE, by Julia Clark and illustrated by Bernard Brett, published by Holt Books, has a delightful chapter on "Mr. Punch Takes a Holiday."

FILM CULTURE magazine, number 39, has a two page article on Lotte Rinegier with pictures of her shadow puppet movies. Carnegie Hall resounds on Sunday afternoons with the appreciative shouts of children enjoying the Kay Marwig Shows which include plays, puppets, games and songs. Les and Ellie Heath, the Leselli Marionettes, did a window show at Robinson's Department store in Los Angeles. In fact, they did two windows and so had to have two different complete set-ups. They are touring "Jack and the Beanstalk" this year.

Two European puppet films, both with English narration, are occasionally presented free of charge at the Museum of the City of New York. There are "The Steadfast Tin Soldier" from Denmark and "Song of the Prairie" from Czechoslovakia. They were there on November first and may be shown again, so watch the papers, New Yorkers. The Peggy Bridge Marionettes play fairly consistently on Saturday afternoons at the Henry Street Playhouse, NYC.

Gia and Lea Wallace of the Village Dance and Puppet Center have been sailing right along with shows galore at 430 6th Avenue. Their roster of shows sound always fascinating. Dr. M. H. Goode reports his family ven-

ture to the Phoenix Theatre to see Bil and Cora Baird's Giant show when they were doing a number of Christmas performances which were again superb as always.

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS special Christmas issue which sold for \$1.50 has on page 28 a two page article on marionettes for children. Construction of a newspaper marionette Santa Claus is pictured but the design by Jewel Alexander of Palisades Playground, Pacific Palisades, California, is adaptable for any number of interesting marionette characters. The group of YMCA Puppet Club members taught by John Zweers in Pasadena, California, publish a Club Bulletin that is always bright and cheerful.

Margarethe Buxton and Bill were in Minnesota during the holidays. Sheri Lewis appeared for a wonderful bit on the Steve Allen "Tonight" show December 7. On December 9 Ted Mack's "Original Amateur Hour" brought forward Robert Shea and Tommy McGovern, two young boys with clever puppet pantomime. Nelly Mendham has been actively teaching the St. Louis Junior League and Odile Stewart and company tackled television with a performance December 27.

Marion's Marionettes, who else but Marion Myers, are going to switch to hand puppets in April to do a commercial for the DuPont Company on Boy's Wear for the Textile Fibers Department. This season past Marion was stringing along with Hal Taylor and his vent act for a knockout Christmas double. Bob Bromley and his puppets were playing in a variety bill at the Olympics in Australia. Barbara Probst, Laura Bueno and Kathie Gordon, first year students at Hunter College High School and Hildegard Hammond, Barbara Grant and Eileen Link, attending P.S. 3 and Mary Bueno from P.S. 41 have become old hands at TV puppetry under the direction of Mrs. Henry Hammond who is in her sixth

year as teacher of P.S. 41's after school puppet group.

Erma White recently visited the Library in Nashville where Tom Tichenor gives weekly performances and enjoyed his "Jackrabbit and the Beanstalk" enormously. Tom is also directing and working in color films with live performers. The Whites are always active with their very active finger puppets. Mrs. Hugo Mathias recently gave a first performance in this country of her very talented puppets, formerly of Frankfurt, Germany, now of North Berger, N. J.

Lettie Connell of San Francisco had a full, full schedule of shows and currently is doing "Red Riding Hood" doing the voices on tape with the help of fellow actor George Armstrong. She reports a magazine called USSR published by a reciprocal agreement between the U. S. government and the USSR. The Russians get a magazine called AMERIKA. The important things was issue three containing an article on Russian TV for children. Among those mentioned are some with Sergei Obrastov's puppet theatre. We understand a previous issue had wonderful pictures of the Obrastov puppets. Did you see the "Muppets" on the Sunday Steve Allen show back on November 4? They appear and have appeared on TV in Washington, D. C., it seems. They're great and very original. Winner of the Panorama Pacific Puppeteer contest was WOLO of San Francisco and he is currently appearing on that show.

A fall issue of LIFE magazine carried an article on a Berkley, California, boy who is entering Harvard at the early age of 13 and whose hobbies include acting in a toy theatre of the penny plain, tuppence colored variety. The December WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION detailed plans and designs for a miniature toy theatre of this type and probably encouraged many youngsters towards production

of "Amahl and The Night Visitors." An excellent short script was included with puppet and scenic designs.

Those enticing hand puppets made by Edith Serell are available on order at moderate cost to P. of A. members. The Old Mill Theatre in Linton Falls, New Jersey, is ringing with the delighted cries of puppets manipulated by Bob Braun and Mary Brown. Bob had good visits with Lea and Gia Wallace and Frank Paris recently. The Old Mill Art Association is sponsoring the Saturday shows in Linton Falls through spring and they are utilizing many of Virginia Austin's tried and true marionettes. The Clippo crowd are on sale after the shows.

VARIETY reviewed two new puppet entries into the night club field. Rene, a new ten minute act, was given good review but branded as unoriginal in ideas for variety marionettes. He obviously had not had opportunity to read recent issues of this magazine. He was playing the Chateau Madrid, N. Y., when the review was issued.

Robin Nelson at home in Dolton, Illinois, during the holidays and preparing new ice revues in miniature for the night club circuit. One of two new show routines will include circus sideshow marionettes. The Gilmores are busy teaching Friday afternoon and Saturday classes at the Denver Art Museum and have gone as far afield as northern Texas and southern Colorado with their new shows "The Colorbook Dragon" and "The Zoo-keeper and the Beasties."

We always welcome news from you, too, and wish you would drop us a line to the Mailbox so that your activity can be reported. We look forward to news of you!

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